

Cannabis and The Christ

Chris Bennett

Contents

Fair Use Notice	1
Chris Bennett and Cannabis and the Christ	1
Jesus used Marijuana	2
Other Christian Sources.....	2
The Anointed One.....	3
The Anointed Ones	4
The Incomplete Baptism	5
Gnostic Mysteries	6
Mysteries of the Faith	6
The Treasure of Light and the Mystery of the Five Trees.....	7
The Leaves of the Tree are for the Healing of the Nations.....	8
Cleanse the Lepers	9
Heal the Wounded	9
Cast out Demons.....	10
Archaeological Evidence.....	10
References	11
Illustrations	13
Figure 1	13
Figure 2	14
Figure 3	15
Figure 4	16
Figure 5	17
Figure 6	18

Fair Use Notice

This material is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for research and educational purposes. We believe this constitutes a “fair use” of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law. No copyright infringement is intended.

Chris Bennett and Cannabis and the Christ

[Figure 1]

Jesus used Marijuana

As doubtful as the following hypothesis might first seem to the reader, I might as well boldly state my case right from the start: either Jesus used marijuana or he was not the Christ. The very word "Christ", by the implication of its linguistic origins and true meaning, gives us the most profound evidence that Jesus did in fact use the same herb as his ancient semitic ancestors, and which is still used by people around the world for its enlightening and healing properties.

The Greek title "Christ" is the translation of the Hebrew word Messiah, which in English becomes "The Anointed" D. The Messiah was recognized as such by his being anointed with the holy anointing oil, the use of which was restricted to the instillation of Hebrew priests and kings (See CC#5). If Jesus was not initiated in this fashion then he was not the Christ, and had no official claim to the title.

D The title "Messiah" is much older than Christianity, as all the ancient kings of Israel are referred to as the "Messiah". "Christos – Anointed One, a title of many Middle-Eastern sacrificial gods: Attis, Adonis, Tammuz, Osiris. . ." 12

D The title "Messiah" is much older than Christianity, as all the ancient kings of Israel are referred to as the "Messiah". "Christos – Anointed One, a title of many Middle-Eastern sacrificial gods: Attis, Adonis, Tammuz, Osiris. . ." 12.

B The "m" is a pronounced plural, and the singular kaneh-bos sounds remarkably similar to the modern cannabis. Although often mistranslated as "calamus", the word has been translated as "fragrant-cane" in most modern bibles, and specifically designates the fragrant flowering tops of cannabis.

From the time of Moses until that of the later prophet Samuel, the holy anointing oil was used by the shamanic Levite priesthood to receive the "revelations of the Lord". At the dawn of the age of Kings, Samuel extended the use of the anointing oil to the Hebraic monarchs by anointing Saul (and later David) as "Messiah-king". These kings lead their people with the benefit of insights achieved through using the holy anointing oil to become "possessed with the spirit of the Lord."

"Anointing was common among kings of Israel. It was the sign and symbol of royalty. The word 'Messiah' signifies the 'Anointed One', and none of the kings of Israel were styled the Messiah unless anointed."¹ The title was clearly only given to those "having the crown of God's unction upon them" (Leviticus 21:12).

After the fall of the Jewish kingdoms, and the bloody purges following the forged discovery of the Book of the Law (1 Kings 23), the cannabis holy oil was prohibited as associated with pagan worship. Yet it seems that certain sects retained the topical entheogen, and continued to practice the older religion, silently awaiting the return of a Messiah-king in the line of David.

The ministry of Jesus marked the return of the Jewish Messiah-kings, and thus the re-emergence of the holy oil. Jesus was called the Christ because he violated the Old Testament taboo on the cannabis oil and distributed it freely for initiation rites and to heal the sick and wounded.

Although there is some evidence of Jesus' use of this Judaic cannabis oil in the traditional New Testament, we get a clearer picture of its importance when we also look at surviving Gnostic documents. The term Gnostic, meaning "knowledge", refers to a variety of early Christian sects which had extremely different beliefs about both Jesus and his teachings than those which have come down to us through modern Christianity.

Other Christian Sources

For the first four hundred years after Jesus' birth, the term "Christian" was used to describe a wide variety of sects and a large volume of different documents. Through the acceptance of one of the more ascetic branches of Christianity by the Roman ruling class, Christianity eventually became the state religion of its former persecutors.

In an effort to unify the faith into a controllable mass, the newly formed Roman Catholic Church held a number of councils. These councils prohibited not only pagans, but also differing Christian sects, and edited a wealth of Christian literature down to the few meager documents which have survived as the modern New Testament. Z

Z The New Testament in its present form was composed and edited between 367-397AD, about twelve generations after the events in question.

In an attempt to save their manuscripts from the editorial flames of the Roman Catholic Church, certain Christians, now considered Gnostic heretics, hid copies of their scrolls in caves. One of these ancient hiding places was rediscovered in our own century, and the large collection of early Christian documents was named the Nag Hamadi Library,² after the Egyptian area where it was found. Prior to this discovery, what little was known of the Gnostics came from a few fragmentary texts, and the many polemics written against them by the founders of the Catholic Church.

There is no reason to consider these ancient Gnostic documents as less accurate portrayals of the life and teachings of Jesus than the New Testament accounts. In a sense, the rediscovery of the Nag Hamadi Library marks the resurrection of a more historical Jesus, an ecstatic rebel sage who preached enlightenment through rituals involving magical plants, and who is more analogous to the Indian Shiva, or the Greek Dionysus, than the pious ascetic that has come down to us through the Bible's New Testament.

The Anointed One

Contrary to the depiction given in the New Testament gospels of Matthew and Luke, Jesus was likely not born as the Messiah. He received this title through his initiation by John the Baptist, and so it is not surprising that both Mark and John are conspicuously absent of the virgin-birth mythology, and begin their stories of Jesus' short career with his initiation by John.

Although their version of Jesus' baptism by John describes it as involving submersion under water, the term "baptism" has connotations of "initiation", and Gnostic scriptures indicate that the original rite was performed in conjunction with the kaneh-bosm anointing rite, "the anointing taking place either before or after the baptismal ceremony."³ Some Gnostic texts also specifically state that Jesus received the title Christ "because of the anointing,"⁴ not because of a water baptism.

Conceivably, the washing off of the oil with water would have been a means to begin the termination of ritual and the oil's effects.

The description of the after-effects of the rite clearly indicates that Jesus underwent an intense psychological experience, more than one would receive from a simple submersion in water.

Jesus came from Nazareth Galilee and was baptised by John in the Jordan. As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove. K And a voice came from heaven "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert, and he was in the desert for forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with wild animals, and angels attended him. (Mark 1: 9-13)

[Figure 2]

K The reference to a dove may have connotations of the Goddess tradition, which was continued by the Gnostics, who paid special attention to Sophia, Goddess of Wisdom. In earlier times the dove was sacred to Astarte, Aphrodite, Ishtar and other forms of the Goddess. "Gnostic Christians said Sophia was incarnate in the dove. . . that descended on Jesus at his baptism to impregnate his mind." ¹²

It should be noted that the vision and words described were seen and heard only by Jesus, as it specifically states that "he saw".

The role played by John the Baptist, as priest and prophet, is very similar to that of the Old Testament prophet Samuel. Just as Samuel's anointing of Saul and David marked them as Messiah-king, so did Jesus' initiation by John make him the Christ.

In the events after Jesus' vision and his overwhelmed recluse into the desert, there are clear parallels with the story of the prophet Samuel's initiation of Saul with the cannabis-rich holy ointment, and Saul's ensuing madness in the form of possession by the Spirit, and wandering off to make nabi (act in a frenzied ecstatic manner) (1 Samuel 10).

The tale of Saul's possession by the spirit is an example of how the ancients interpreted the effects of cannabis and other entheogens. What we perceive as being "high" or "stoned" the ancients called "possessed by the Spirit of the Lord."

"As a result of the spiritual 'anointing' Jesus expected to be different; and he was different. The prophecies had said that the Messiah would receive from God wisdom and insight, the power to heal and to subjugate evil. The faith of Jesus was so strong that he did not question that these capacities had now been conferred upon him." 6

The entheogenic effect of the cannabis anointing oil would have immensely magnified both Jesus' own expectations, and the ensuing experience with John.

In some authoritative texts of the Gospel according to Luke, after the Baptism the voice of God declares, "This day I have begotten thee." J This indicates that the event of Jesus' encounter with John marks the true beginnings of Jesus' mission and his acknowledgement as the Messiah.

[Figure 3]

J The same proclamation is stated of the Anointed One, or King in Psalm 2: 7.

The importance of the anointing, and Jesus' own acknowledgement of it, is again exemplified in the gospel of Luke.

According to the New Testament Jesus began his ministry in Nazareth, by reading the following passage from the scroll of Isaiah and proclaiming, "today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:16)

The Spirit of Yahweh God is upon me, because Yahweh has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound... (Isaiah 61:1-2)

The Anointed Ones

Unlike the shamanistic priests and kings of earlier generations, Jesus did not follow the strict Old Testament taboos that limited the holy cannabis oils use to Yahweh's chosen few (Exodus 30:33), but broke tradition and began to liberally use it in both healing and initiation rites.

Through this open distribution the singular Christ, "the Anointed", was extended to become the plural term "Christians", that is, those who had been smeared or anointed. "By rubbing on this divine unction. . . obtained from certain special herbs or plants, they believed they were donning the panoply of God."7

As the New Testament's John explains:

. . . you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. . . the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit – just as it has taught you, remain in him." (1 John 2: 27). L

L A similar claim was made about hashish by the medieval Sufi poet Fuzuli, who recorded in his treatise Bang and Wine, the story of Basra, a disciple whose sheik felt that he had reached the ultimate degree of perfection through the consumption of hashish, and that he was no longer in need of further guidance. This story led to Fuzuli's

proclamation that “hashish is the perfect being. . . for the seeker of the mystical experience.” In many ways the Sufi movement can be seen as the phoenix which rose from the ashes of the earlier Gnostics.

“ . . . the Christian, the ‘smeared or anointed one’, received ‘knowledge of all things’ by his ‘anointing from the Holy One’ (1 John 2: 20). Thereafter he had need of no other teacher and remained forevermore endowed with all knowledge (v. 27).

“Whatever the full ingredients of the Christian unction may have been, they would certainly have included the aromatic gums and spices of the traditional Israelite anointing oil: myrrh, aromatic cane, cinnamon, and cassia. . . Under certain enclosed conditions a mixture of these substances rubbed on the skin could produce the kind of intoxicating belief in self-omniscience referred to in the New Testament.”⁸

Mie: Kaneh Bosm, documented as cannabis.⁵

This quote is from scholar John Allegro, whose work I drew from for this article. Allegro was a great scholar of both the bible and ancient languages, and his work broke a lot of ground. Allegro was also the only human secularist on the original team of scholars involved in the translation of the Dead Sea Scrolls, so he came to his views through more unbiased anthropological thinking than that of his more “faithful” co-researchers. In *The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross*, Allegro translated the kaneh-bosm reference in Exodus as “aromatic cane”, and I have quoted him here on how the anointing oil “could produce a kind of intoxicating belief in self-omniscience.” Yet Allegro failed to make the rightful connection with cannabis, seeing instead another plant drug at use, the *amanita muscaria* mushroom. His writings reveal he was extremely prejudiced against cannabis, even going so far with his etymological arguments as to suggest that the Greek term “kannabis” somehow referred to a mushroom. Allegro never smoked marijuana, but his own observations of what he referred to as “the ‘pot’-smokers of today, the weary dotards who wander listlessly round our cities and universities,” caused him to discount any possible use of cannabis as a means of achieving spiritual ecstasy.

[Figure 4]

The Incomplete Baptism

In the first few centuries AD, Christian Gnostic groups such as the Archontics, Valentians and Sethians rejected water baptism as superfluous, referring to it as an “incomplete baptism”.⁹ In the tractate, the *Testimony of Truth*, water Baptism is rejected with a reference to the fact that Jesus baptized none of his disciples.³

Being “anointed with unutterable anointing”, the so-called “sealings” recorded in the Gnostic texts, can be seen as a very literal event. “There is water in water, there is fire in chrism.” (*Gospel of Philip*).

“The anointing with oil was the introduction of the candidate into unfading bliss, thus becoming a Christ.”¹⁰

“The oil as a sign of the gift of the Spirit was quite natural within a semetic framework, and therefore the ceremony is probably very early. . . In time the biblical meaning became obscured.”¹³

The surviving Gnostic descriptions of the effects of the anointing rite make it very clear that the holy oil had intense psycho-active properties, which prepared the recipient for entrance into “unfading bliss”. In some Gnostic texts like the *Pistis Sophia* and the *Books of Jeu*, the “spiritual ointment” is a prerequisite for entry into the highest mystery.¹⁰

In the *Gospel of Philip* it is written that the initiates of the empty rite of Baptism:

“go down into the water and come up without having received anything. . . The anointing (chrisma) is superior to baptism. For from the anointing we were called ‘anointed ones’ (Christians), not because of the baptism. And Christ also was [so] named because of the anointing, for the Father anointed the son, and the son anointed the apostles, and the apostles anointed us. [Therefore] he who has been anointed has the All. He has the

resurrection, the light. . . the Holy Spirit. . . [If] one receives this unction, this person is no longer a Christian but a Christ.”

Similarly, the Gospel of Truth records that Jesus specifically came into their midst so that he:

“might anoint them with the ointment. The ointment is the mercy of the Father. . . those whom he has anointed are the ones who have become perfect.”

The apocryphal book, The Acts of Thomas, refers to the ointment’s entheogenic effects as being specifically derived from a certain plant:

Holy oil, given us for sanctification, hidden mystery in which the cross was shown us, you are the unfold of the hidden parts. You are the humiliator of stubborn deeds. You are the one who shows the hidden treasures. You are the plant of kindness. Let your power come by this [unction].

Gnostic Mysteries

The Gnostics had many levels of initiation, and the mysteries of these different grades were not written down like the more esoteric surviving texts were, but were given verbally at special ceremonies. Elements like the recipe of the obviously psychoactive holy oil were guarded with the closest secrecy, and were known only by the sect’s most trusted initiates. This was a standard mystery school method, as “magic revealed is magic lost”, and such secrets could only be entrusted to the group’s most loyal members.

“Gnostic treatises did not reveal the whole matter. . . the final revelation was only communicated by word of mouth in the body, and by vision out of the body.”¹⁰

“It is certain that Gnostic texts even in cultic matters favour a metaphorical symbolic manner of speaking and. . . clearly avoided communicating precise details about their ‘mysteries’.”³

In 130-200AD, the Catholic Church Father Irenaeus accused the Gnostics of initiating members with “secret sacraments”. In his discussion of Gnostic texts which dealt with the anointing rite, he stated that they were written in an archaic manner, “to baffle even more those who are being initiated.”¹⁴

We can add to Irenaeus’s comments that the Gnostics likely wrote in such a concealing fashion to “baffle” their persecutors, like Irenaeus, whom they feared would find out the source behind the secret power of their anointing oil.

Mysteries of the Faith

Such a hidden reference to other psychoactive plants can be seen in “the mystery of the five trees”, which were used by Jesus in complicated shamanistic initiation rituals. They are described in what is possibly the oldest Christian text in existence O, The Gospel of Thomas:

O The Gospel of Thomas has an estimated date of composition as early as 40-100 AD, and likely predates the earliest New Testament Gospel, Mark, which is thought to have been written around 60 AD.

“...there are five trees for you in Paradise... Whoever becomes acquainted with them will not experience death.”

In the Gnostic view, “not experiencing death” meant reaching a certain state of interior purification or enlightenment, at which point the initiate would “rise from the dead” and “never grew old and became immortal.” That is to say, he rose from ignorance and blindness, gained possession of the unbroken consciousness of his spiritual ego, and as such realized that he was a part of a larger Cosmic whole, which continued on long after the disappearance of the material body. Jesus referred to attaining this “higher” state of consciousness, as “entering the kingdom of heaven”.

The attainment of this Gnostic state can be compared to the goal of yoga, (which itself means “union”), where the successful devotee obtains “a radical switch in consciousness obliterating the sense of individuation.” 15

As with the similar goal of yoga union, the “kingdom of heaven” state was not attained instantaneously, but required years of vigorous training. Like certain older branches of yoga, a variety of psychoactive plants were used as aids to facilitate the devotee in attaining this “higher” state.

Although the Gnostics give us some detailed descriptions of these esoteric Christian teachings, it is interesting to note that they are also alluded to in New Testament accounts by Jesus himself:

“To you has been given the secret of the Kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables: so that they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand. . . ” (Mark 4:11)

The Treasure of Light and the Mystery of the Five Trees

At the turn of the present century Professor GRS Mead summarized a German translation of a surviving Gnostic text, the “Second Book of Ieou”. 16 P The text describes Jesus bidding male and female disciples to join him so that he can reveal to them the great mystery of the Treasure of Light.

[Figure 2]

P One of the few that managed to survive the Catholic Church’s editorial flames, without being hidden with the Nag Hamadi codexes.

In order to accomplish this, the candidates have to be initiated by three Baptisms: The Baptism of Water, the Baptism of Fire, and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, “and thereafter the Mystery of the Spiritual Chrism [anointing].” 10

Jesus tells his followers that the master-mysteries of the Treasure of Light are involved with the mystery of the Five Trees, which may mean having knowledge of the magical plants that were used in the ceremony.

All of these mysteries Jesus promises to give to His disciples, that they may be called “Children of the Fullness (Pleroma) perfected in all mysteries.” The Master then gathers His disciples, and sets forth a place of offering, placing one wine-jar on the right and on the left, and strews certain berries and spices round the vessels; He then puts a certain plant in their mouths, and another plant in their hands, and ranges them in order round the sacrifice. 10

Continuing with the ritual, Jesus gives the disciples cups, along with other articles, and seals their foreheads with a magical diagram. Then, like shamanistic and magical ceremonies the world over, he turns his disciples to the four corners of the world, with their feet together in an attitude of prayer, and then offers a prayer which is prefixed with an invocation, and continues with a number of purifications and into the Baptism of Fire.

In this rite vine-branches are used; they are strewn with various materials of incense. The Eucharist is prepared... 8

The prayer [this time, is to] the Virgin of Light. . . Q the judge; she it is who gives the Water of the Baptism of Fire. A wonder is asked for in “the fire of this fragrant incense”, and it is brought about by the agency of Zorokothora. R What the nature of the wonder was, is not stated. Jesus baptizes the disciples, gives them of the eucharistic sacrifice, and seals their foreheads with the seal of the Virgin of Light.

Q This offering of “fragrant-incense” to the Virgin of Light is reminiscent of the Old Testament offerings of kaneh-bosm incense to the Queen of Heaven (1 Kings 3:3). The Goddess played a paramount role in Gnostic theology.

R The title Zorokothora is likely derived from Zoroaster, an ancient Persian prophet-shaman. Centuries before the Christian age the Zoroastrian Magi were known for their use of “bhanga” (cannabis), as well as a primordial entheogenic drink known as “haoma” or “soma”, now widely identified as anamita muscaria, or fly agaric mushroom. The Zoroastrians had a great influence on Jewish culture during the years of Persian rule. The concept of heaven and hell (conspicuously absent from the Old Testament) is derived from Zoroastrianism. Jesus’

apparent knowledge of Zoroaster, and Zoroastrian sacraments, hints that perhaps amanita was identified with the entheogenic “wonder” filled “five trees” which Jesus used in his shamanistic initiation ceremonies. One of the more significant and widespread Gnostic sects, the Manicheans, were known to use amanita mushrooms, and worshipped Jesus right alongside Zoroaster. The Manicheans survived into the twelfth century in parts of Europe and China, and performed ceremonies similar to the one which Jesus is described as presiding over.

Next follows the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. In this rite both the wine-jars and vine-branches are used. A wonder again takes place, but is not further specified. After this we have the Mystery of Withdrawing the Evil of the Rulers, which consists of an elaborate incense-offering.

The “wonder” in the incense which so perplexed Mead was presumably a reference to its undescribable psychoactive effects. It’s also likely that the other undefined “wonder” indicates the magical properties of the different plants used in the ceremony.

It would seem to follow that the identity of the different plants, vines, and berries described in the excerpts were identified to the participants as the Mystery of the Five Trees.

At this time we can only speculate what other plants were used in the ceremony. The account of mandrake in Genesis 30: 14-16 and in Solomon’s Song of Songs 7: 13, (which seems to indicate its addition to the holy anointing oil), clearly document the long term interest the Hebrews had with these seemingly magical plant angels.

That the use and knowledge of such plants could have been passed down by certain “heretical” branches of the faith such as the Gnostics seems self evident. The addition of such a powerful hallucinatory drug such as mandrake (or belladonna, which was also popular in the Middle East at that time) would help to explain some of the extreme experiences related to the holy anointings and baptisms described in the Gnostic literature. S

S Recipes for medieval witches’ “flying ointments” contain cannabis, mandrake, belladonna and other entheogens, and the out-of-body experiences attributed to the Gnostics have many parallels with the Witches Sabat, as do aspects of their cosmology.

The Leaves of the Tree are for the Healing of the Nations

Cannabis is likely the most useful plant medicine in existence, and it has been used to treat a wide variety of ailments throughout history. Few readers will not be aware of the international fight taking place at this time, to get the sick and dying access to the amazing healing and curative powers of the cannabis plant’s leaves and flowers.

As such, it should not be surprising to find that there are numerous references to the early Christians healing with the anointing oil, giving further indication that Jesus and his apostles had begun to freely dispense the sacred kaneh-bosm anointing oil, which had previously been under a strictly enforced prohibition, restricting its use to the Hebrew priests and kings.

Knowledge of cannabis’ healing powers may account for some of Jesus’ healing “miracles”. The Acts of Thomas specifically invokes the healing quality of the sacred plant into the holy oil: “You are the plant of kindness. Let your power come. . . and heal by this unction.”

T Like other ancient historians, Biblical authors had a tendency to magnify historical events and make them appear miraculous. The earliest gospel is thought to have been recorded about 60 years after the crucifixion, and such a text cannot be regarded as an accurate, contemporary historical account. With time, imagination and fancy have a tendency to obscure memory. Yet it seems possible that many of the New Testament accounts could have at their basis logically explainable events, which became shortened and glorified into the unexplained miracles of the New Testament Gospels.

The Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles demonstrates Jesus’ own view of the importance of this rite, when he gives the disciples an “unguent box” and a “pouch full of medicine” with instructions to go into the City of Habitation, and heal the sick. He tells them you must heal “the bodies first” before you can “heal the heart”.

“Knowledge and healing were two aspects of the same life-force. If to be rubbed with the ‘Holy Plant’ was to receive divine knowledge, it was also to be cured of every sickness. James suggests that anyone of the Christian community who was sick should call to the elders to anoint him with oil in the name of Jesus The Twelve are sent out among their fellow-men casting out demons and anointing the sick with oil (Mark 6:13).”⁸

At the time of Christ, no differentiation was made between medical treatment and exorcism or miracles, all three were interrelated. To cure someone of a disease or to relieve them of an injury was paramount to exorcising the tormenting spirit, or miraculously healing them.

Thus it is not so surprising to find that the anointing oil expelled demons and gave protection against them, correspondingly it cured and dispelled the “sickness” of the soul and body. Exorcism (literally “driving out”) was performed by means of anointing. The ancient magical texts provide abundant evidence for this application of oil.³

The oldest New Testament Gospel, clearly verifies this use of the holy oil early on in Jesus’ controversial ministry:

And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.
(Mark 6:13)

Cleanse the Lepers

[Figure 6]

One of Jesus’ most well known miracles is his healing of lepers, which appears in the first three New Testament Gospels. The term translated as leprosy can actually refer to any number of skin diseases, usually systemic infectious lesions or extreme allergic reactions.

Due to its topical anti-bacterial properties, cannabis has been used to treat a variety of skin diseases such as pruritis, also known as atopic dermatitis, an inflammatory skin disorder. The symptoms of pruritis are severe itching, “and patches of inflamed skin, especially on the hands, face, neck legs, and genitals,”¹⁷ a description that sounds startlingly similar to the skin disease described in Leviticus 13, called tsara’ath. It is usually translated in the Old Testament as leprosy, but has been noted by a number of scholars to be more likely a reference to a severe form of pruritis rather than true leprosy (Hansen’s disease).

In relation to Jesus’ curing of the lepers (Matthew 8,10,11 Mark 1, Luke 5,7,17), we could have an example of a disease expelled through the use of the cannabis “holy oil”. Besides the anti-bacterial properties of cannabis oil, cannabis has been said to be effective in treating sufferers of Pruritis even when administered through smoking!¹⁷

A 1960 study in Czechoslovakia concluded that “cannabidiolic acid, a product of the unripe hemp plant, has bacteriocidal properties.”¹⁸ The Czech researchers “found that cannabis extracts containing cannabidiolic acid produced impressive antibacterial effects on a number of micro-organisms, including strains of staphylococcus that resist penicillin and other antibiotics.”^U

U Evidence of cannabis ointment’s topical healing abilities can also be seen in its use as a treatment for the modern “sexual leprosy” of herpes. Sufferers of cold sores and genital herpes have reported successful treatments by soaking cannabis leaves and flowers in rubbing alcohol and then dabbing the greenish solution on the site of a potential herpetic sore outbreak. “They say it prevents blistering and makes sores disappear in a day or two.”¹⁷ Direct contact with THC killed herpes virus in a 1990 research study at the University of South Florida.¹⁹

“The Czech researchers successfully treated a variety of conditions, including ear infections, with cannabis lotions and ointments. Topical application of cannabis relieved pain and prevented infection in second-degree burns. . . .”¹⁷

Heal the Wounded

The Gnostic Gospel of Philip makes direct reference to how the holy oil “healed the wounds”, and not surprisingly we find that cannabis was used in salves and ointments for burns and wounds throughout the middle-ages. Cannabis resin was also used for other topical applications, especially in relieving the pain of worn and crippled joints.

The Acts of Thomas specifically states “Thou holy oil given unto us for sanctification. . . thou art the straightener of the crooked limbs.” This medicinal quality of cannabis oil could account for the miraculous healings of cripples attributed to Jesus and his disciples.

“Cannabis is a topical analgesic. Until 1937, virtually all corn plasters, muscle ointments, and [cystic] fibrosis poultices were made from or with cannabis extracts.”¹⁹

A common and effective home remedy for rheumatism in South America was to heat cannabis in water with alcohol, and rub the solution into the affected areas. In the middle of the 19th century Dr WB O’Shaughnessy claimed to have successfully treated rheumatism (along with other maladies), with “half grain doses of cannabis resin” given orally. ²⁰

Cast out Demons

In the ancient world and up until medieval times, the disease now known as epilepsy was commonly considered to be demonic possession, and its victims were outcasts from society. Here again, we could have an explanation for events of demonic exorcism (as in Mark 5, Luke 8), and the demon’s expulsion by the use of cannabis.

Dr Lester Grinspoon and other medical marijuana advocates have offered testimonials from modern epilepsy sufferers, who have noted the profound effects of natural marijuana in controlling their seizures. Dr Grinspoon also points to the positive results of cannabis and synthetic cannabidiol in the treatment of epilepsy obtained in a 1975 report, ²¹ and again in a 1980 study which concluded “for some patients cannabidiol combined with standard antileptics may be useful in controlling seizures. Whether cannabidiol alone, in large doses, would be helpful is not known.” ²²

Other ailments of spasmodic muscular contractions such as Dystonias, which results in abnormal movements and postures, have been beneficially treated with the administration of cannabis.¹⁷

Another of the miracles attributed to Jesus was the healing of a woman from chronic menstruation (Luke 8:43-48). Again we find that cannabis has been used for the treatment of such ailments, as the US Dispensary of 1854 listed cannabis extract as a remedy for “uterine hemorrhage”, as well as other maladies. ^V

[Figure 7]

V “The complaints to which it has been specifically recommended are neuralgia, gout, tetanus, hydrophobia, epidemic cholera, convulsions, chorea, hysteria, mental depression, insanity.” (US Dispensary of 1854). ²⁴

Archaeological Evidence

In an earlier article (CC#5) the use of cannabis among the Jews prior to the Christian period was documented, and a recent archeological dig in Bet Shemesh near Jerusalem has confirmed that cannabis medicine was in use in the area up until the fourth century. Thus it would seem to stand to reason that it was used for these purposes throughout the intervening Christian period.

In the case of the Bet Shemesh dig, the cannabis had been used as an aid in child bearing, both as a healing balm and an inhalant. Scientists commenting on the find noted that cannabis was used as a medicine as early as the 16th century BC, in Egypt. ²⁴

This find garnered some attention, as can be seen from the Associated Press article, “Hashish evidence is 1,600 years old”, that appeared in Vancouver newspaper The Province, on June 2, 1992:

Archaeologists have found hard evidence that hashish was used as a medicine 1,600 years ago, the Israel Antiquities Authority said yesterday.

Archaeologists uncovered organic remains of a substance containing hashish, grasses and fruit on the abdominal area of a teenage female’s skeleton that dates back to the fourth century, the antiquities authority said in a statement.

Anthropologist Joel Zias said that although researchers knew hashish had been used as a medicine, this is the first archeological evidence. (Associated Press 1992).

Although the idea that Jesus and his disciples used a healing cannabis ointment may seem far-fetched at first, when weighed against the popular alternative (one that is held by millions of believers) that Jesus performed his healing miracles magically, through the power invested in him by the omnipotent Lord of the Universe, the case for ancient accounts of medicinal cannabis seems a far more likely explanation.

Indeed, it was through the dawning of the Spirit, provided by the entheogenic and healing anointing oil, that the early followers of Jesus came to consider themselves Christians, or Anointed-Ones! Ironically, many modern day Christians zealously persecute marijuana culture, unaware that the name of their faith makes reference to a psychoactive topical ointment that was rich in cannabis.

References

1. TW Doane, Bible Myths and their Parallels in Other Religions. First published in 1882, republished in 1985 by Health Research.
2. The Nag Hamadi Library in English, James Robinson Ed. Harper Collins, 1978, 1988
3. Kurt Rudolph, Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism. Harper, San Francisco, 1987.
4. Gospel of Philip.
5. Sula Benet, Early Diffusions and Folk Uses of Hemp. (Reprinted in Cannabis and Culture, Vera Rubin, Ed. The Hague: Moutan, 1975.)
6. Sula Benet (as Sara Benetowa) Tracing One Word Through Different Languages. (1936). (Reprinted in The Book of Grass, 1967.)
7. Weston La Barre, Culture in Context; Selected Writings of Weston La Barre. Duke University Press, 1980
8. Dr Hugh Schonfield, The Passover Plot. Bantam Books, 1967.
9. John Allegro, The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Christian Myth. 1980.
10. John Allegro, The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross. Paper Jacks, 1970.
11. The Paraphrase of Shem.
12. GRS Mead, Fragments of a Faith Forgotten: Some Short Sketches Among the Gnostics of the First Two Centuries. Theosophical Publishing Society, London and Benares, 1900
13. Cailin Matthews, Sophia, Goddess of Wisdom. The Aquarian Press (an imprint of Harper Collins Publishers), 1992.
14. Barbara G Walker, The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets. Harper Collins, 1983
15. Henry Chadwick, The Early Church. Pelican Books, 1967.
16. Elaine Pagels, The Gnostic Gospels. Random House, 1979.
17. George Feurstein, Encyclopedic Dictionary of Yoga. Paragon House, 1990.
18. Codex Brucianus, an 1892 German translation by Dr Carl Schmidt. (quoted by Chris Bennett, Osburn & Osburn, Green Gold the Tree of Life: Marijuana in Magic and Religion. Access Unlimited, 1995.)
19. Dr Lester Grinspoon and James Bakalar, Marihuana: The Forbidden Medicine. Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1993.
20. Todd Mikuriya, MD, Ed, Marijuana Medical Papers. Medi-Comp Press, 1973.
21. Jack Herer, The Emperor Wears No Clothes; Hemp and the Marijuana Conspiracy. Queen of Clubs Publishing, 1985-95.
22. WB O'Shaughnessy, On the Preparation of Indian Hemp (1839). (Reprinted in Marijuana Medical Papers, Todd Mikuriya, MD, Ed. Medi-Comp Press, 1973.
23. Consroe, Wood and Buchsbaum, "Anticonvulsant Nature of Marihuana Smoking", Journal of the American Medical Association 234 1975: 306-307.
24. Cunha, Carlini, Pereira, et al, "Chronic Administration of Cannabidiol to Healthy Volunteers and Epileptic Patients", Pharmacology 21, 1980: 175-185.

25. Nature Vol 363, 20 May, 1993.

26. Ernest Abel, Marihuana, The First Twelve Thousand Years. Plenum Press, 1980.

Part 4 of “When Smoke Gets in my I” a series on the history of cannabis and human consciousness.

Adapted from Sex, Drugs, Violence and the Bible: The Pagan Origins of the Judaic and Christian Traditions (Volume 2, The New Testament and Related Literature). By Chris Bennett and Neil McQueen.

Original Source: http://zzco.org/chris_bennett/christ.html

QBL Mirror: <http://qbl.com.br/?p=766>

License: Unknown

QBL

Illustrations

Figure 1

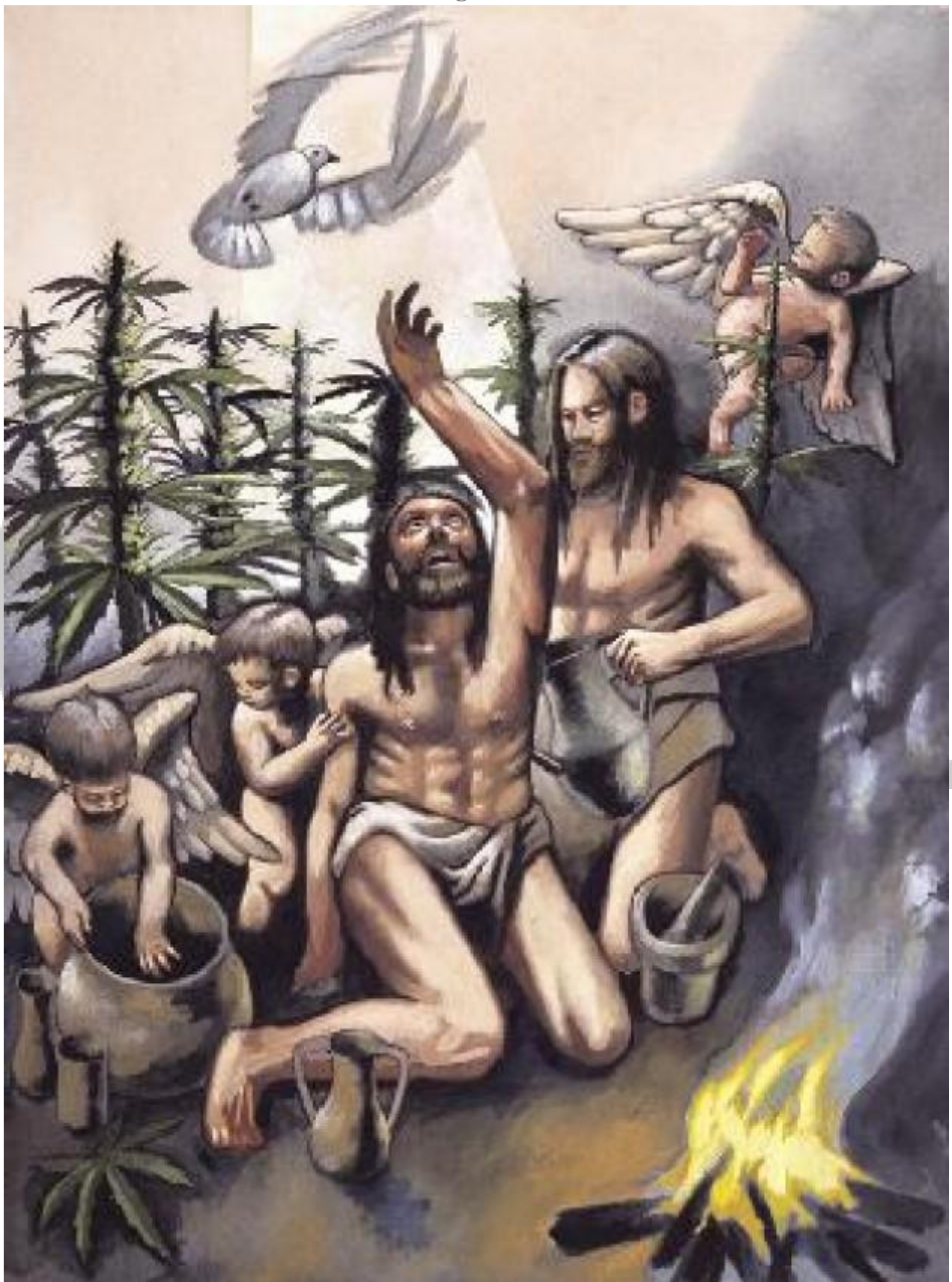


Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

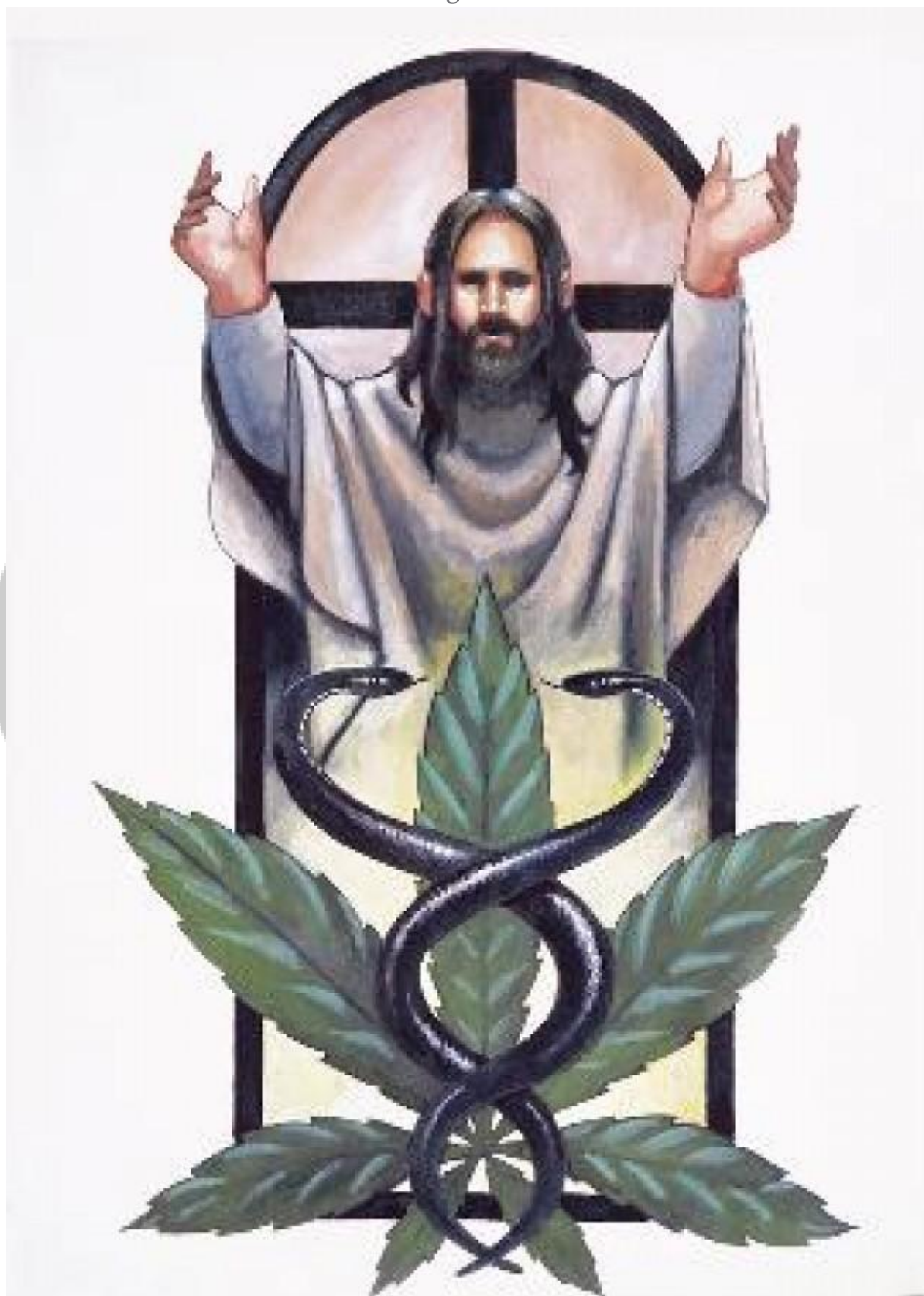


Figure 6

